

What is claimed is:

1. A method for treating plants in need of growth promotion, comprising applying to said plants, to the seeds from which they grow or to the locus in which they grow, a non-phytotoxic, effective plant growth promoting amount of an amide compound having the formula I



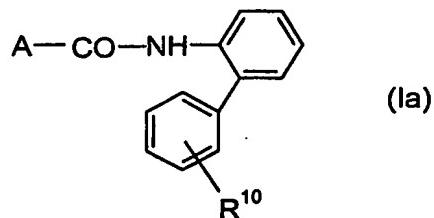
in which

A is an aryl group or an aromatic or non-aromatic, 5- or 6-membered heterocycle which has from 1 to 3 hetero atoms which are selected from O, N and S; where the aryl group or the heterocycle may or may not have 1, 2 or 3 substituents which are selected, independently of one another, from alkyl, halogen, CHF_2 , CF_3 , alkoxy, haloalkoxy, alkylthio, alkylsulfinyl and alkylsulfonyl;

R^1 is a hydrogen atom;

R^2 is a phenyl or cycloalkyl group which may or may not have 1, 2 or 3 substituents which are selected, independently of one another, from alkyl, alkenyl, alkynyl, alkoxy, alkenyloxy, alkynyloxy, cycloalkyl, cycloalkenyl, cycloalkyloxy, cycloalkenyloxy, phenyl and halogen, where the aliphatic and cycloaliphatic radicals may be partially or fully halogenated and/or the cycloaliphatic radicals may be substituted by from 1 to 3 alkyl groups and where the phenyl group may have from 1 to 5 halogen atoms and/or from 1 to 3 substituents which are selected, independently of one another, from alkyl, haloalkyl, alkoxy, haloalkoxy, alkylthio and haloalkylthio, and where the amidic phenyl group may or may not be condensed with a saturated 5-membered ring which may or may not be substituted by one or more alkyl groups and/or may have a hetero atom selected from O and S.

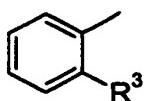
2. A method according to claim 1, which comprises an amide compound of the formula Ia below:



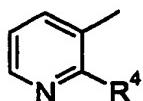
in which

A is

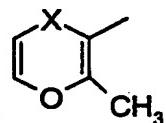
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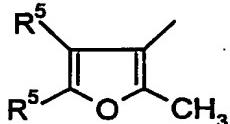
(A1)



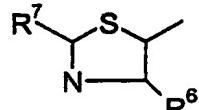
(A2)



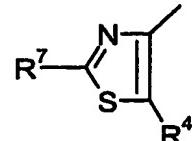
(A3)



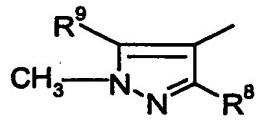
(A4)



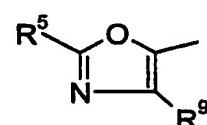
(A5)



(A6)



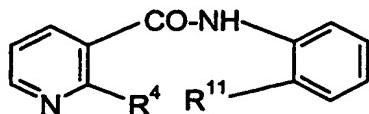
(A7)



(A8)

- X is methylene, sulfur, sulfinyl or sulfonyl (SO_2),
 R^3 is methyl, difluoromethyl, trifluoromethyl, chlorine, bromine or iodine,
 R^4 is trifluoromethyl or chlorine,
 R^5 is hydrogen or methyl,
 R^6 is methyl, difluoromethyl, trifluoromethyl or chlorine,
 R^7 is hydrogen, methyl or chlorine,
 R^8 is methyl, difluoromethyl or trifluoromethyl,
 R^9 is hydrogen, methyl, difluoromethyl, trifluoromethyl or chlorine,
 R^{10} is $C_1\text{-}C_4$ -alkyl, $C_1\text{-}C_4$ -alkoxy, $C_1\text{-}C_4$ -alkylthio or halogen.

3. A method according to claim 1, which comprises as amide compound a compound of the formula Ib below:



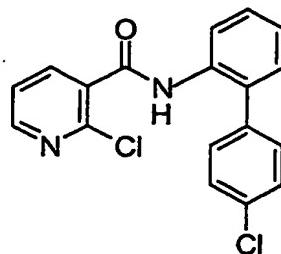
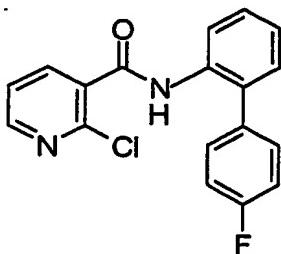
(Ib)

in which

R^4 is halogen and

R^{11} is phenyl which is substituted by halogen.

4. A method according to claim 1, which comprises as amide compound a compound of the formulae below:



5. A method according to claim 1, wherein the amide compound of formula (I) is 2-chloro-N-(4-chlorobiphenyl-2-yl)nicotinamide.
6. A method according to claim 1, wherein the plant growth promoting amount of the amide compound of formula (I) applied is sufficient to provide at least one plant growth promoting effect selected from the group consisting of:
- a) bigger fruit size
 - b) bigger vegetable size
 - c) higher sugar concentration of fruits
 - d) more developed root system
 - e) higher crop firmness
 - f) longer storability
 - g) improved appearance
 - h) better fruit finish
 - i) earlier fruit maturation
 - j) increase in plant height
 - k) bigger leaf blade
 - l) less dead basal leaves
 - m) greener leaf color

- n) earlier flowering
 - o) increased shoot growth
 - p) improved plant vigour
 - q) early germination.
7. A method according to claim 1, wherein the amide compound of formula (I) is applied to said plants or the locus in which they grow in the form of granules at an application rate of from about 0.005 kg/ha to about 0.5 kg/ha of compound of formula (I).
 8. A method according to claim 7, wherein the application rate is from about 0.01kg/ha to about 0.2 kg/ha of compound of formula (I).
 9. A method according to claim 1, wherein the plants being selected from the group consisting of rice, corn, cereal and vegetable plants and turf.
 10. A method according to claim 1, wherein a mixture of the amide compound of formula I with a strobilurin is used.
 11. A method according to claim 10, wherein the strobilurin is selected from the group consisting of azoxystrobin, dimoxystrobin, fluoxastrobin, kresoxim-methyl, metominostrobin, orysastrobin, picoxystrobin, pyraclostrobin or trifloxystrobin.
 12. A method according to claim 10, wherein a mixture boscalid with pyraclostrobin is used.
 13. A method according to claim 10, wherein the ratio between the amide compound I and the strobilurin is from 20:1 to 1:20.
 14. A method according to claim 10, wherein the amide compound and the strobilurin are applied simultaneously, that is either together or separately, or in succession.